MEDIEVAL
SPAWN
WITCHBLADE
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BRANDO
AS
BAT

This issue is dedicated to the memory of *Jerry Siegel*

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SPECIAL THANKS TO TODD MCFARLANE

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YOUR...
YOUR MOTHER'S A WHORE, ROYALE...
AS A MATTER OF FACT, SHE WAS. I WASN'T AWARE THAT THE TWO OF YOU HAD MET.
NOT PROFESSIONALLY, I HOPE.
DON'T GET CLEVER WITH ME YOU...YOU SELF-OBSESSED LITTLE TURD.
I HOPE THIS APOCALYPSE YOU'RE SO LOOKING FORWARD TO BLOWS UP IN YOUR STINKING FACE.
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A HALF-COMPETENT, PETTY, GLOATING BACKSTABBER WITH A... A BIT OF MAGIC AND TOO MUCH LUCK...
AT LEAST I'M NOT A SEVERED HEAD IN A BROWN PAPER PARCEL.
BASTARD...
EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS OF PAIN AND MISERY, AND YOU'VE MANAGED TO HOLD A GRUDGE THE WHOLE TIME, MMM?
I LIKE THAT.

THE PYRENEES. 1175 A.D.:
MATTHEW ROYALE?
NEVER BLOODY HEARD OF YOU.
BUT I KNOW YOU, LORD CARDINALE.
YOU WIELD THE DARKNESS POWER. THROUGH ITS BLACK SORCERY, MELDED TO YOUR VERY SOUL, YOU HAVE CREATED A KINGDOM THAT STRETCHES FROM FLANDERS TO THE SOUTH OF SPAIN.
NOT A MAN IN CHRISTENDOM CAN EVEN THINK YOUR NAME, BUT THAT HIS HEART WILL QUAKE WITH--
I KNOW WHO I AM, ROYALE. WHO THE HELL ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?
I AM THE MAN WHO WILL MAKE YOU TRULY MIGHTY.

TOO LATE.
I DESTROY ALL WHO STAND BEFORE ME. I CREATE WHATEVER I CHOOSE --A CITADEL, AN ARMY, A WORLD OF PLEASURE. EVEN MY QUEEN, ELINOR, I FORMED FROM THE MAGIC AT MY FINGERTIPS.
WITH THE DARKNESS, ROYALE, I AM MIGHTY.
YES AND NO.
YOUR DARKNESS FUNCTIONS ONLY IN THE NIGHT, LORD CARDINALE, OR DEEP BENEATH THE EARTH. SOON, YOUR SUBJECTS WILL REALIZE THAT YOUR SOLDIERS DO NOT MARCH IN DAYLIGHT--
--AND THEN YOUR REIGN IS OVER
SO WHAT'S YOUR BIG IDEA, THEN?
LAUNCH AN ASSAULT ON FAERIE...
THE OTHERWORLD THAT LIES BESIDE OUR OWN.
THE SPELLS PERFECTED BY THE FAERIE FOLK ARE UNIMAGINABLE. A MAN WHO POSSESSED SUCH KNOWLEDGE, AND WIELDED IT ON EARTH, WOULD RULE OUR WORLD
THE LIGHT IN FAERIE IS NOT DRAWN FROM OUR SUN. THE CREATURES IN YOUR ARMY ARE IMMUNE TO IT.
USE YOUR POWER. TEAR DOWN THE WALLS OF THE OTHERWORLD. BURN THE LAND OF FAERIE TO A CINDER--AND CLAIM ITS PRIZES AS YOUR OWN.
AND WHAT'S YOUR INTEREST IN ALL OF THIS?

I AM A STUDENT OF SORCERY, MY LADY ELINOR.
SOME OF THE FAERIE MAGIC--WHILE USELESS FOR MARTIAL PURPOSES--FASCINATES ME ON A PURELY ACADEMIC LEVEL, AND I WOULD RELISH THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY IT AT LENGTH...
AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THAT, ARE WE?
RIGHT, THIS IS TOO GOOD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MISS.
LET'S DO IT.
LET'S WHAT?!
BELIEVE ME, MY LORD!
"YOU WON'T REGRET THIS."
THE OTHERWORLD OF FAERIE, ONE DAY LATER:
'TIS LONG 'ERE I TARRIED BY THIS BROOK, GALANOR. THESE LANDS OF OURS CONTAIN SO MANY THOUSANDS OF DELIGHTS, I SOMETIMES FORGET THE LOVELIEST LIE THIS CLOSE TO HOME.
NOT SINCE SWEET Y'IRMETH AND MYSELF DID SCALE THE MOUNTAINS OF RONDOLIN,
HAVE --
THUNK!

TORINOR!
I WOULDN'T WORRY.
YOU'LL BE WITH HIM AGAIN, IN A FEW MOMENTS.

B-B-BUT WHO--?
WE ARE THE ARMY OF THE DARKNESS. WE SERVE GREAT CARDINALE, OUR MOST BELOVED LORD AND MASTER.
AND WE HAVE COME TO RAPE THIS WORLD.
OH NO! NO! MERCY, I BEG OF YOU!!
MERCY!
NOT FOR YOU, ELF-BOY!
SHWAKK!
YES!!
THAT'S IT! KILL THE IDIOTS! I'VE ALWAYS HATED BLOODY ELVES!
A WORD OF CAUTION, MY LORD...

FAERIE'S RELATIONSHIP TO OUR OWN WORLD IS A COMPLICATED ONE AT THE BEST OF TIMES. AT CERTAIN NEXUS-POINTS WITHIN REALITY, THE TWO WORLDS OVERLAP.
THE CONFLICT YOU HAVE STARTED COULD WELL SPILL OVER TO EARTH AT ANY TIME...
"AND THERE'S NO TELLING WHO MIGHT BECOME INVOLVED."

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YOU JUST SIGNED YOUR DEATH WARRANT, STRANGER!
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, SCUM!
BRING HIM DOWN!
THAT'S IT! HOLD HIM!
SHLOOT
AYE! HOLD ME!
EEEIIIGHHH!
THEY'VE SLIPPED BACK INTO FAERIE--AND THAT BLOODY STRANGER'S GONE WITH THEM! WHO THE HELL [redacted]
IT IS A SPAWN...
QUITE A YOUNG ONE, TOO. HOW ODD.
DOES IT POSE A THREAT?
OF COURSE NOT.

MERRIE ENGLAND, THAT AFTERNOON
I'M NOT PAYING THIS!
NINETY BITS FOR A W[illegible]D AND BREAKFAST! YOU'VE GOT TO BE OUT OF YOUR MIND!
BE REASONABLE, KATARINA...
YOU BE BLOODY REASONABLE!

I THOUGHT YOU'D GIVEN UP ROBBING PEOPLE, STALKER!
ONLY TEMPORARILY, LOVE. AS SOON AS I CAN [illegible] PIT, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK EARNING MY LIVING AS A [illegible]
ANYWAY, ALLOW ME TO [illegible] BILL...
TEN BITS, SEVENTY-FOUR [illegible] ANOTHER FORTY, SUNDRY FURNITURE ITEMS BROKEN IN ALL THE FIGHTS YOU STARTED: CALL IT TWENTY BITS. CLEANING THE FAT BLOKE'S BLOOD OUT OF THE CURTAINS: FIVE
BRIBING CONSTABLE HOTSPUR TO TURN A BLIND EYE: FIFTEEN BITS, AND MY LAST SET OF DIRTY WOODCUTS...
I DON'T REMEMBER STARTING ANY FIGHTS
OH, COME ON!
YOU WENT UP TO VULVAR THE VIKING AND SAID, "YOU'VE GOT A FACE LIKE A SCABBY DOG'S RECTUM", AND THEN YOU KICKED THE LIVING CRAP OUT OF HIM. WHAT'S THAT IF IT'S NOT STARTING A FIGHT?
IT WAS THE WAY HE SAID IT...
EVERY BLOODY NIGHT, KATARINA. SOME SUBTLE VARIATION ON THE THEME OF YOU [illegible] A DOZEN ALES AND THEN BEATING SOME BLOCKHEAD TO A PULP. IT'S BAD FOR BUSINESS, LOVE...
YES, WELL. I'M AFRAID I'M A BIT...FINANCIALLY [illegible] RIGHT NOW...
AH! BROKE!
IN THAT CASE, LET ME FAMILIARIZE YOU WITH BOTH OPTIONS IN MY NON-CASH, ONE-[illegible] SCHEME...
HE SAID I HAD A NICE ASS.
YOU DO.

FIRST OPTION: THAT LOT'S BEEN SITTING THERE FOR TEN YEARS, OR SO I'M TOLD. LOAD IT ONTO THE WAGON AND DRIVE IT OVER TO JOBBIE MCGURK'S DUNG EMPORIUM, AND I FIGURE WE'RE JUST ABOUT QUITS.
YEAH, RIGHT. SECOND OPTION?
DOES THAT SLEAZY GRIN MEAN WHAT I THINK IT MEANS?
OH, YES.
THEN YOU'D BETTER TELL ME WHERE YOU KEEP THE SHOVEL.
GODDAMNED WORTHLESS SON OF A BRAINLESS SATANIC CHICKEN RAPIST I OUGHT'TA TAKE THIS SHOVEL AND RAM IT SIDEWAYS UP HIS--
BE HAPPY IN YOUR WORK, THAT'S MY ADVICE.

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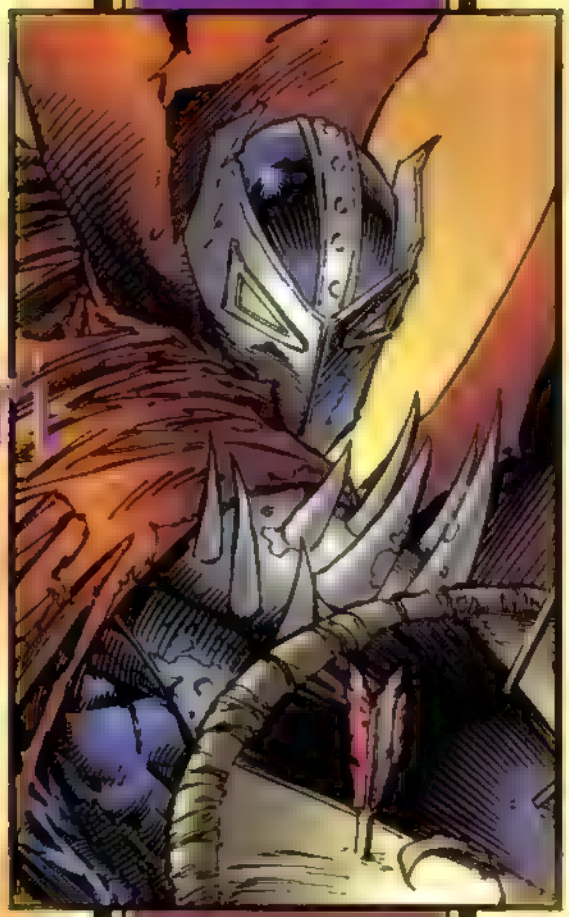
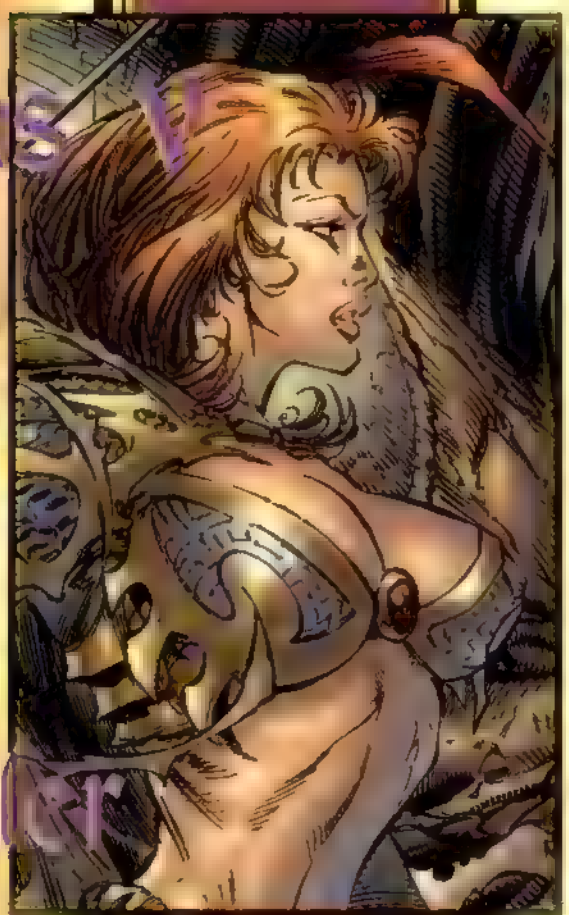
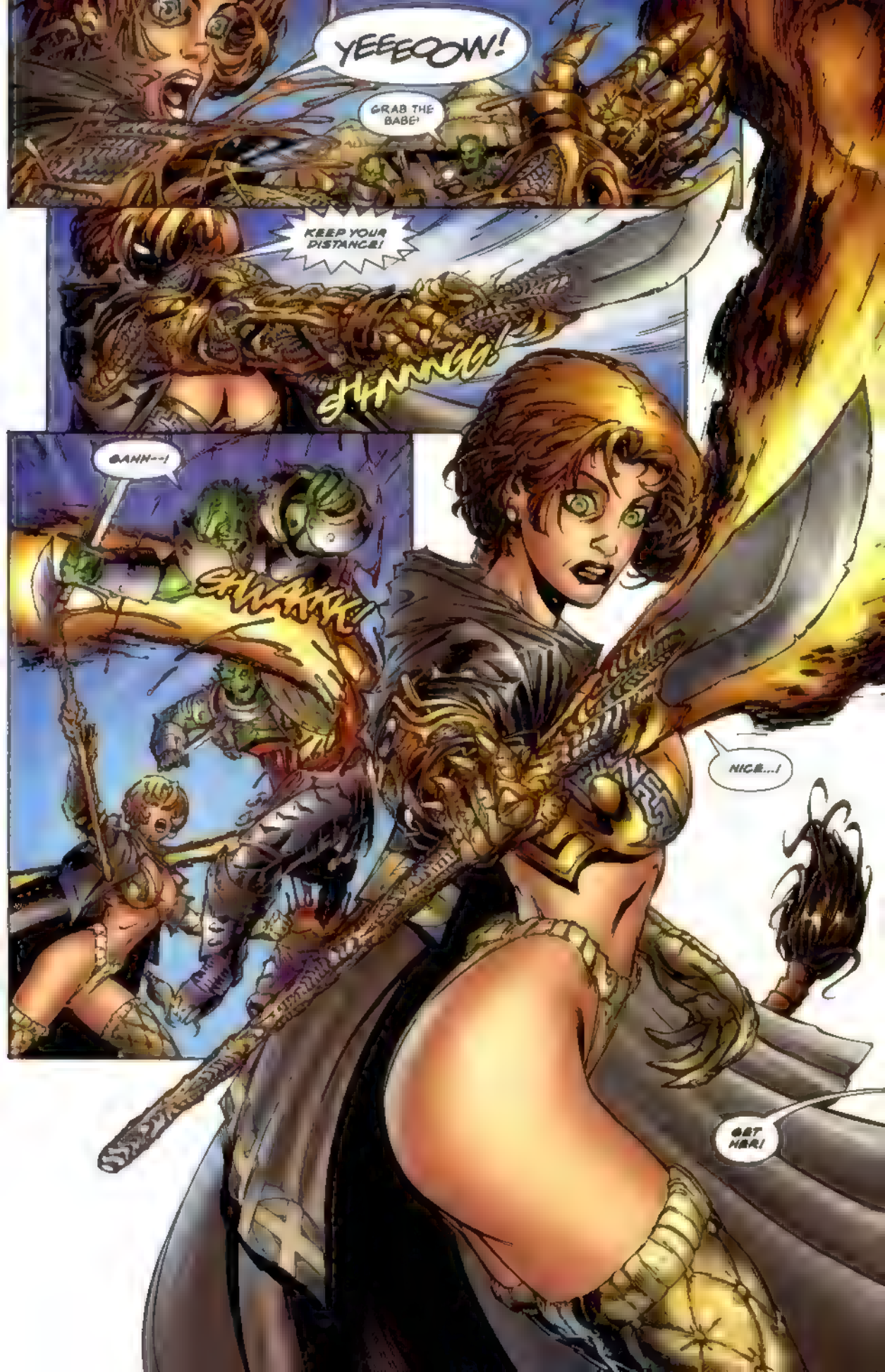




SILVESTRI
TW

D'YOU MIND ME ASKING WHAT THE HELL YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
JUST ENJOYING THE VIEW, LOVE.
YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO PISS ME OFF, YOU SPUD-BASHING IRISH CREEP--
MM. WILL YOU RELAX?
YOU MIGHT BE A RUTHLESS AMAZON SWORDSWOMAN FROM THE BARREN WASTES OF WHEREVER IT IS YOU'RE ACTUALLY FROM, KATARINA--BUT WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE A DECENT SORT AT HEART, AND YOU WOULDN'T HACK UP YOUR OLD MATE FOR THE SAKE OF NINETY BLOODY BITS!
LEAVE THE POSTURING STUFF TO THE WANKERS AND GET BACK TO YOUR SHOVELLING, WILL YOU?
THIS IS DEFINITELY A NEW LOW FOR ME...
I'LL NEVER GET USED TO THESE FANCY FOREIGN LAGERS... SO TELL US: HOW'D YOU MANAGE TO END UP PENNILESS?
SIGNED ON AS A [illegible] WITH DYLAN THE WELSH. USUAL DEAL: FOOD AND WATER ON THE TRIP, SHARE OF THE PROFITS WHEN WE GOT TO TORREMOLINOS...
DYLAN THE WELSH? IS HE STILL WORKING WITH [illegible], THE BLIND NAVIGATOR OF NORWICH?
YES, I'M AFRAID HE IS.


YEEEOOW!
GRAB THE BABE!
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!
SHHNNGG!
GAHH--!
SHWAAK!
NICE...!
GET HER!

SHWAKKK!
COME ON THEN, SCUMBAGS!
RAAARGH!!
MORE OF THEM!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS IS OR WHO YOU ARE--
--BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE!
AYE
GOOD!

KILL THEM ALL!
EEEIIIGGHH!
SHWAKK!
AAAAAAHHH!
STEKK!
SHWISH!
NOOOO!
SHWOKK!
SHAKK!
SHUNCH!
AAWEEEE!
HUHHHCCCH!

THEY'RE UNSTOPPABLE! FLEE!
RUNNERS! THEY'RE ESCAPING!
NO THEY'RE NOT--
SHWOOOOMMMM

WHAT ARE YOU, SOME KIND OF SORCEROR OR SOMETHING?
OR SOMETHING.
AND YOU CALLED OUT MY NAME, DIDN'T YOU? WHEN YOU FIRST SHOWED UP?
HAVE WE MET?
...NO.
I MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN.
OH YEAH? WELL, WHO ARE ALL THESE FREAKS? HOW DID YOU POP OUT OF THIN AIR WITH THEM?
AND WHO EXACTLY ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
SHRRTTCHH!
HHHK--!
WHO--?
STALKER!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE--
YEAH, YEAH, LATER FOR THAT BOLLOCKS. HAVE YOU SEEN WHAT THIS MANIAC'S DONE TO MY PUB?
IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE--
I THOUGHT YOU WANTED RID OF THE PLACE!
YEAH, AT A PROFIT! AND WHAT IS THAT BLOODY THING DOING IN YOUR HAND?
IT FEELS GOOD.
IT'S-- OH.
I DON'T KNOW...IT JUMPED ONTO ME WHEN THE FIGHT STARTED, AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW... WELL.
I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING, THOUGH:
THAT'S NICE...
I MUST GO, 'ERE THE RIP BETWEEN WORLDS CLOSES ONCE AGAIN.
FARWELL... KATARINA.

HOLD ON, YOU CAN'T JUST DISAPPEAR! YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTIONS!
I CANNOT TARRY, MY LADY.
THE LAND OF FAERIE IS UNDER FIERCE ATTACK, AND THE BATTLE IS PASSING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THAT WORLD AND THIS. I MYSELF WAS DRAGGED ACROSS THIS VERY MORN.
INNOCENT ELVEN FOLK ARE BEING MURDERED IN THEIR HUNDREDS, AND THEIR HOMES NOW LIE IN RUIN. I HAVE SLAIN FULL TEN SCORE OF THESE WARRIORS OF DARKNESS--AND STILL THEY COME.
I MUST RETURN.
WAIT! WHAT ABOUT--
DAMMIT!
KATARINA... DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT GATEWAY, WAITING FOR US IN THE OTHER-WORLD?
WHAT?
CASH.
MONEY. POSH. READIES. FILTHY LUCRE.
YOU'VE HEARD THE LEGENDS OF FAERIE, HAVEN'T YOU? VAST PILES OF TREASURE, GATHERED BEFORE THE DAWN OF MAN...GOLD AND SILVER, DIAMONDS AND EMERALDS, STACKED SO HIGH THEY REACH THE VERY CLOUDS...
WHOPPING GREAT WEDGES OF CASH! CASH! CASH!
KATARINA: WE HAVE TO GO TO FAERIE, NOW.

WAAHH!
LOOKS LIKE...
SOMEONE ELSE...OR SOME-THING ELSE... AGREES WITH YOU, STALKER.
LET'S GO.
IT'S...IT'S THE WITCHBLADE...!
THEY'RE ENTERING FAERIE, TOO! AND WHAT'S THAT DAMN THING SHE'S WEARING, ANYWAY?
I'VE HEARD OF SUCH WEAPONS, BUT I WAS NEVER SURE IF I BELIEVED--
RIGHT, ROYALE? DOES IT POSE A THREAT TO US?
WELL?
ROYALE?
TO BE CONTINUED...